

# UK Wolf Conservation Trust

## Research and dissertation opportunities

The UKWCT will consider research and dissertation proposals from students. Research must be non-invasive and ethical. Below are examples of dissertation titles.

### **Discuss how people perceive wolves' verses true wolf characterises.**

How are we influenced by myths and legend?  
Who was influential in the change of attitudes towards wolves?  
How have attitudes changed through the ages towards the wolf?  
Is the wolf really a threat to human life?  
Are these perceptions cultural based?  
Why is the dog man's best friend while the wolf is his enemy?

### **Predator V Pet**

Discuss the changes that have occurred to create mans best friend  
What similarities can still be found in the dog and wolf?

### **What are the advantages and disadvantages of socialised captive wolves? Argue the case for both socialised and non-socialised wolf packs in captivity.**

Think about the public and keepers points of view

### **Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of non lethal predator control.**

Which strategies work best and why?  
Are they practical for a herdsman travelling with a group of animals to take with them?  
What factors affect choice of control?  
Come up with new ideas for non-lethal predator control, do they work?

### **Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of the wolf reintroduction**

Does it work?  
What are the legal requirements and are there European directives?  
Would it work in the UK?  
What would the benefits be?  
What would the cons be?  
Who is best suited to work towards reintroduction in a country?  
Who would need to be consulted and included in the decision making process to ensure success?  
Which other predators may it be easier to reintroduce before the wolf?

### **Wolves are re-colonising Europe**

Discuss how they are doing this, and why they are able to now when they have had difficulties in the past.

**Wolf / Human conflict**

In what situations do wolves and humans come into conflict? (Think about different types of conflicts in different countries)

What can be done to resolve conflict?

Are wolves dangerous to humans?

**Compare and contrast different species of wolves.**

What adaptations do they have that makes them ideal for their environments?

**How do the seasons affect the wolf's physiology & behaviour?**

Discuss coat changes, body weight, energy levels, behaviours etc.

**Discuss relationship changes within a pack related to hormone levels.**

How do the female wolves interact in the different stages of their breeding cycle?

What differences do you see in the male's behaviour at these times?

Who mates?

**Discuss the affect of climate and /or hormones on food intake in captive wolves.**

Do food requirements change at different times of the year?

What influences these changes?

When are the food requirements greatest?

When are food requirements at their least?

**What is the affect of scent in the environment on wolf behaviour?**

How do wolves react to new smells in the environment?

Is tracking or wind scenting used more?

At what distance can wolves pick up a new scent?

What do they do if a new scent is introduced in to their environment?

Does scent affect behaviour?

What percentage of scenting is used in comparison to other senses?

**Discuss the role of play within a pack.**

How do wolves play?

When do they play?

What are the advantages of play?

Discuss the role of each pack member in initiating play

Who plays with whom?

Does play ever turn in to something else?

Is play used by young to develop skills?

**Social interaction and its importance within the pack**

How do wolves interact?

Do males and females interact differently?

Does interaction change throughout the year?

**Self medication – do wolves do it?**

If so, what, why and when?

What are the properties of any plant or soil material eaten and does this relate to what might be physically or emotionally going on within the wolf?

### **Problem solving**

Can they figure out complex problems?

Can they change their strategy?

Can they learn from others?

How long does it take to learn a new skill?

### **Are wolves 'prey specific' or can they learn to like new foods?**

Does what they eat as cubs influence what they eat as adults?

Can wolves learn to favour new foods?

What influences these changes if they can?

### **Do wolves need adult wolf role models to learn how to be a wolf?**

Nature verses nurture – are wolves born knowing how to be a wolf or are the skills to hunt etc. learnt?

Do hand reared wolf cubs act differently to wolf pack raised cubs.

### **Discuss all forms of communication used by wolves.**

Which form of communication is used the most?

When, why, how and what is used?

Which form of communication is favoured by the wolves you observed?

What influenced the communication?

Who communicates the most within the group?

### **Does environment affect behaviour in captive wolves?**

How does space influence pack behaviour?

If juvenile wolves can not disperse, how does this affect pack dynamics?

What effect does captivity have on the omega wolf?

What mental stimulation is used to enrich the lives of captive wolves?

Do captive wolves lose their wild instincts and become domestic animals over successive generations?